

Brookline Preservation Commission

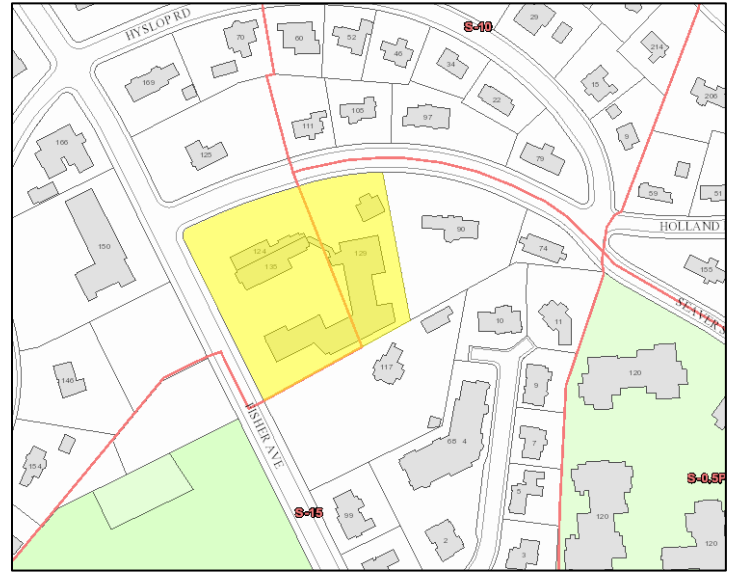
Demolition Application Report

Address: 124 Holland Road (also known as 100, 129, and 135 Fisher Avenue)

Applicant: Welltower Trs Holdco LLC

Building Type: Former House and Garage, Student Center and Dormitory

National Register Listing (if Applicable): Fisher Hill NR District



Historical/Architectural Significance:

The property includes three very different structures - the ca. 1896 Mitton House, the ca. 1966 Dormitory and Student Center, and the ca. 1928 garage/ “Carriage House” building. Each building is an example of the designs prevalent in its period of construction and speaks to the development of the Fisher Hill property over time.

Fisher Hill was named for Francis Fisher, an early nineteenth century landowner and resident who worked as a commission merchant with the firm of E.S. and F.K Fisher and J.B. Robinson on Central Wharf in Boston. When Fisher and other area property owners decided to develop the land in 1884, they hired Frederick Law Olmsted to lay out the neighborhood. The neighborhood’s existing curvilinear design and street layout is Olmsted’s solution to its irregular topography and from the start, the development was considered to be one of Brookline’s most attractive and desirable neighborhoods.

The Colonial/Classical Revival style building now known as the Mitton House was originally built in 1896 by Architect William Peters for Frederick S. and Josephine S. Gay. William Peters (1858-1938) graduated from Harvard and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris before opening his own office in Boston in 1888. In 1898 he established the firm of Peters and Rice with Arthur Wallace Rice, which developed several well regarded examples of High Georgian design rowhouses in the Back Bay. Owner Frederick Gay was a well-known authority on New England History as well as a collector of rare book. Gay did not have a formal profession but served as the curator of British and American History tracts at Harvard, the president of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, and a trustee of the Brookline Public Library while also serving as a member of

numerous local and state historical organizations and institutions. After his death in 1916, his wife gave more than 1,500 volumes from his collection to Harvard's Widener Library.

According to local directories and census data, Josephine Gay remained at what was then known as 135 Fisher Avenue through 1926, when she moved into the former carriage house at the eastern end of the property (now 74 Holland Road). The property at that time stretched along Holland Road to the intersection of Holland and Seavers and was subdivided into three lots, with the Mitton House and its former gardens encompassing the westernmost lot. The only known change made to the house by the Gay family was the construction of a new dormer in 1919.

The next owners of the house, George W. and Anne Mitton, hired the architectural firm Parker, Thurman and Rice to make significant changes to the house after their purchase of the site in 1927. Mitton was the President of Jordan Marsh Department Stores from 1916-1930, and served as the Company's Chairman from 1930 until his death in 1947. The Mittons replaced the ell on the east façade with a larger addition, created a library, and added the sunrooms and piazza to the south façade. The Mittons also had Parker, Thomas and Rice design the Colonial Revival style garage in 1928 as a new six-car garage. Additional changes in the 1940s included the construction of a screened porch in 1943 and the addition of an elevator in 1944.

After Anne Mitton's death in 1952, the property became part of the new Cardinal Cushing College, a private women's college operated from 1952-1972 by the Sisters of the Holy Cross. The former home was converted into a dormitory and student residence in 1955 for 26 students. In the early 1960s, the architectural firm of Maginnis, Walsh and Kennedy was hired to construct Madeleva Hall, a larger dormitory and student center, in the former gardens. Maginnis, Walsh and Kennedy was a prominent Boston firm which was nationally known in the mid-twentieth century for its Roman Catholic churches and institutions including the Boston College campus, the Basilica of the National Shrine in Washington, DC, and at least 40 churches in Massachusetts alone. The resulting contemporary, L-shaped building provided housing for 127 students and included a chapel, cafeteria, offices, and classrooms. The new building ran along the east and south property lines, effectively enclosing the former gardens on three sides and creating a courtyard area between the former house and new institutional building. While the new building was originally designed to be entirely separate from the existing Mitton House, the design was revised prior to construction to include an enclosed breezeway addition that still connects the two structures today.

The Sisters of the Holy Cross closed the school in 1972 and initially proposed to convert the campus into an over 55 community with space for 150 people. This plan never moved beyond the planning stages, however, and the site was briefly owned by the Montrose School before Newbury College purchased the site in 1982.

Newbury College had been founded in 1962 on Newbury Street in Boston as the Newbury School of Business with a goal of supplying local Boston businesses with competent and educated employees. By the mid-1970s, Newbury College had become the largest two-year college in the country with fifteen campuses across the Boston area. After acquiring the former Cardinal Cushing campus in 1982, the junior college began consolidating its satellite locations into one centralized campus. During Newbury College's tenure, the garage was converted into an office and classroom space with a separate address of 100 Holland Road and a new basement entrance was added to the Mitton House in 1993 to provide access for new classroom space.

The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 as part of the Fisher Hill Historic District.

At the Brookline Preservation Commission hearing on November 26th, 2019, The Student Center and Dormitory as well as the Carriage House were found significant and given 18 month demolition stays. On May 6, 2020

Welltower, Inc requested a lift of stay for the buildings at 124 Holland Road based on submitted plans for adaptive reuse, documentation and redevelopment.

The proposed development combines the lots at 117 Fisher Avenue and 124 Holland Road to create a single parcel, referred to as the East Parcel in Welltower, Inc.'s development plans. The East Parcel is to be developed in accordance with the Fisher Hill Special Overlay District zoning amendment, appearing as Warrant Article 9 which was approved at the June 2020 Town meeting.

At the hearing on May 27th, 2020 the Commission heard the first request to lift the stay of demolition on 117 & 124 Holland Road. A subcommittee of three members was appointed to see the project through the remainder of the design development phase and assist the applicant in developing an appropriate mitigation package. This package, submitted for this request to lift includes the following items: Participation of the subcommittee in the DAT process, restoration and adaptive reuse of the Mitton House, archival photographic documentation of the significant buildings proposed for demolition and exploration of salvage and reuse of building materials in the buildings to be demolished.

The subcommittee met jointly with the Design Advisory Team between July 29th and September 9th. Through the DAT design review, the following changes were made to the proposed design:

- Entry piazza revisions- refinements to pavement and bollards to enhance pedestrian safety as well as the lowering of the main entry canopy height.
- Breezeway modifications- the drive-through portal was lowered from 16' to 14' and the design was simplified, eliminating the decorative rail at the roof. A reveal was added where the breezeway meets the Mitton house and the connecting portion was changed from brick to wood.
- Roofscape design was simplified by removing eyebrow dormers where not necessary and adjusting dormers and terraces.
- Main building detailing simplified.
- Refined fenestration on East elevation.
- Mitton House elevator shaft- alternate locations were explored but the original exterior location ultimately chosen. At Commissioner's request, the applicant removed spandrel glass in the tower, replacing it with louvers and a stone medallion.
- Provided enhanced sustainability measures for solar thermal heating of pool and a solar ready roof.
- Expanded bio retention area & walking paths.
- Exterior lighting information provided.
- Information on materials reuse for buildings to be demolished.
- Improvements to trash pick up

Restoration and adaptive reuse was a part of the DAT review process as described above and is included in the final plan set. The applicant responded to Commissioner's concern for the slate roof and have committed to repairing or replacing the slate roof in-kind. Trim will also be replaced in-kind. The 26 existing vinyl windows will be replaced with wood sash. The existing wood windows will be restored and routed as necessary to enable them to accept insulated glass panes in the existing muntins.

The applicant hired Robert Brewster Photography to complete documentation of the existing buildings proposed for demolition. The submittal, received on June 25th, includes the following:

- 2 printed copies: 8 pg site map and photo key showing view locations
- 2 printed copies: spreadsheet listing all views, with descriptions and photographer info
- 2 copies: 2 disk set of digital versions of all views and documents:
 - Tiff files of all views

- Screen resolution jpeg files of all views
- 8 pg site map and photo key showing view locations
- Spreadsheet listing all views, with descriptions and photographer info
- 2 4x6 archival color prints each of 79 views, each labeled and packed in individual archival envelopes

On July 9th, the subcommittee met with representatives from the Welltower team onsite to tour the buildings proposed for demolition for the purpose of identifying salvageable building materials. On October 23rd the applicant provided a letter detailing their plan to salvage and reuse specific materials from the buildings proposed for demolition. The salvage plan is as follows:

- Stone will be removed from the buildings and stored onsite. Old New England Granite will evaluate this separated material and remove stone they feel is viable for reuse.
- Nor-east Architectural Antiques assessed the buildings and will remove the following items in coordination with the project team:
 - Edwards Hall: staircase, wood paneling, fireplace mantels, exterior doors, pine flooring and the rear fire escape.
 - Carriage House: Round window and cupola
 - Athletic Team Room: Chimney topper
- Jarmak Lumber has committed to reclaiming reusable rough sawn joists from Edwards Hall.

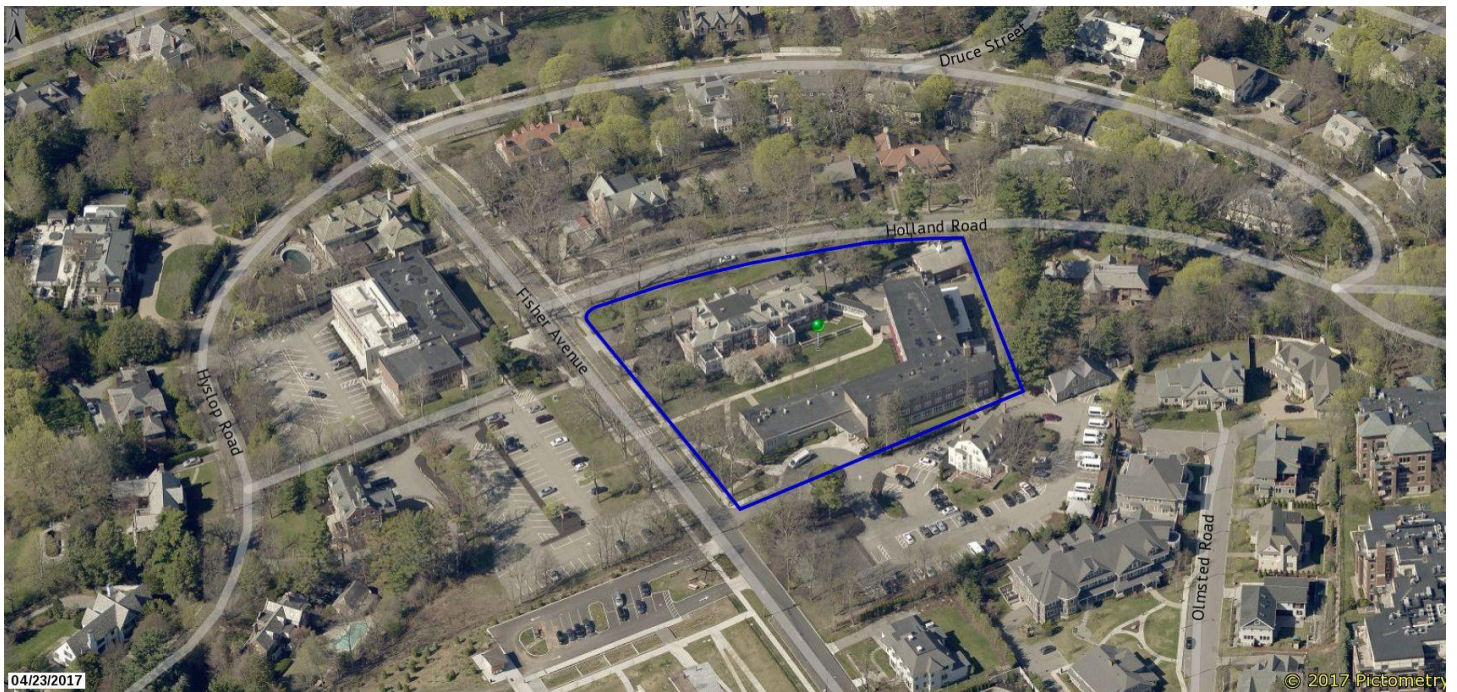
Aerial view 124 Holland Road, looking south.



Aerial view of 124 Holland Road, looking east.



Aerial view of 124 Holland Road, looking north.



Aerial view of 124 Holland Road, looking west





Front (North)
facade of
Mitton House,
(124 Holland
Road/135
Fisher Avenue)
from corner of
Fisher Ave and
Holland Road



Right (West)
façade of
Mitton House,
(124 Holland
Road/135
Fisher Avenue)
from Fisher
Avenue



Front (North)
facade of Mitton
House, (124
Holland Road/135
Fisher Avenue)
from Holland
Road



Rear (South)
facade of Mitton
House, (124
Holland
Road/135 Fisher
Avenue) from
Fisher Avenue



Rear (South) and Left (East) facades of Mitton House, (124 Holland Road/135 Fisher Ave) from courtyard.

Location of additions.



South façade of connector between Mitton House and ca. 1966 Student Center/Dormitory (129 Fisher Ave) from courtyard



View of
Courtyard from
Fisher Avenue



Additional View
of courtyard
from Fisher
Avenue and
West façade of
ca. 1966 Student
Center/
Dormitory (129
Fisher Ave)
from courtyard



North and West
facades of ca.
1966 Student
Center/
Dormitory (129
Fisher Ave)
from courtyard



West and South
facades of ca.
1966 Student
Center/
Dormitory (129
Fisher Ave)
from Fisher
Avenue



South facade of ca.
1966 Student
Center/
Dormitory (129
Fisher Ave) from
Parking Lot



South facade of ca.
1966 Student
Center/
Dormitory (129
Fisher Ave) from
Parking Lot



South facade
of ca. 1966
Student
Center/
Dormitory
(129 Fisher
Ave) from
Parking Lot



East facade of
ca. 1966
Student
Center/
Dormitory
(129 Fisher
Ave) from
Parking Lot



North façade
of ca. 1966
Student
Center/
Dormitory
(129 Fisher
Ave) and
northeast
corner of
Mitton House
(124 Holland
Road/135
Fisher Ave)
from Holland
Road



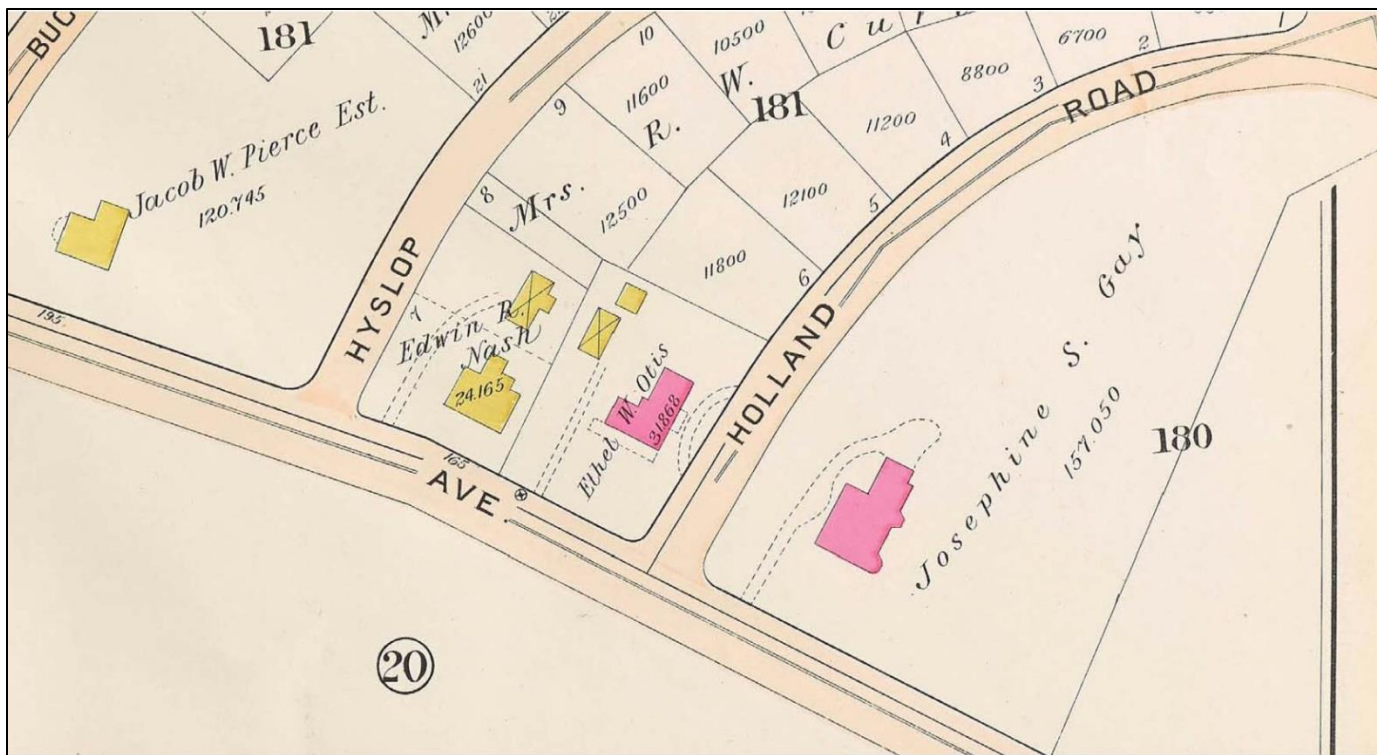
Front (West)
façade of ca.
1928 garage
(100 Holland
Road) from
driveway



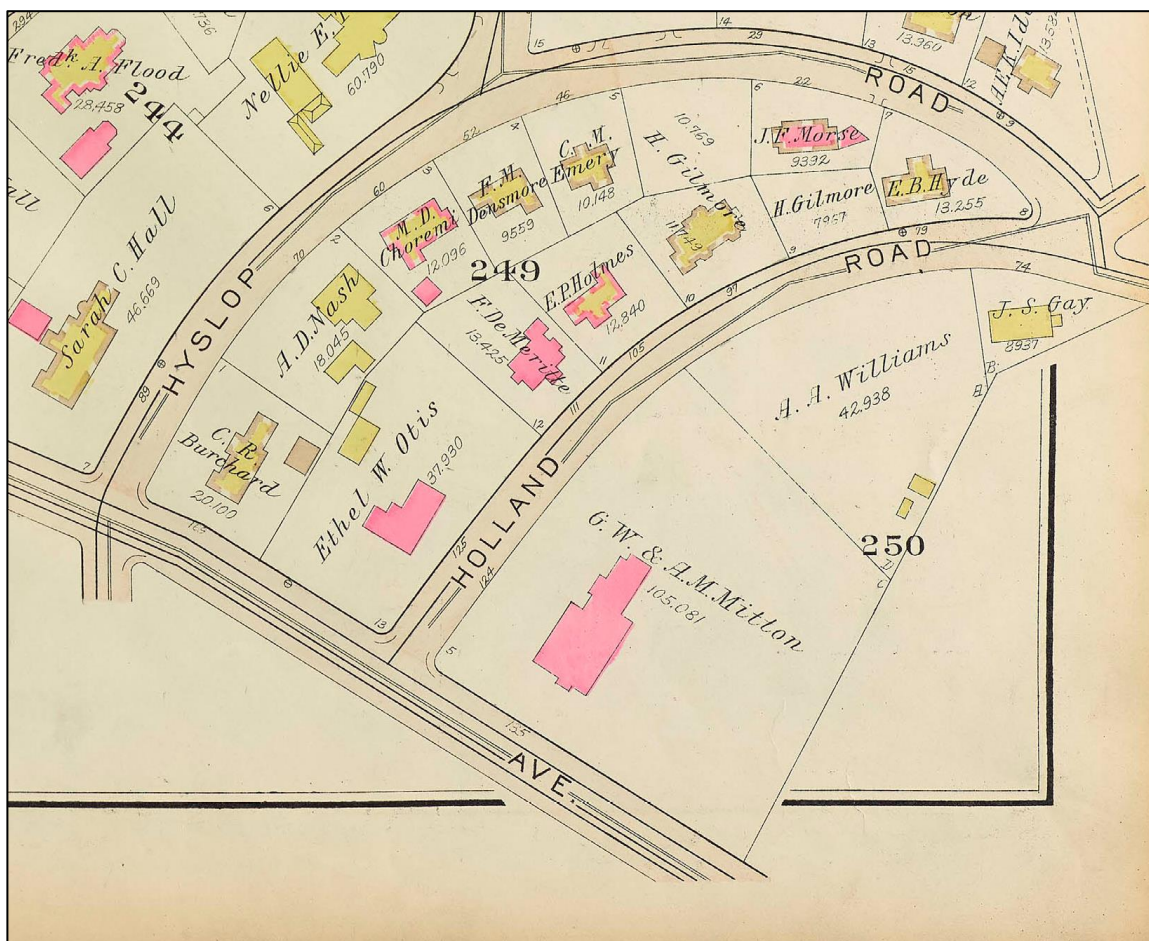
Front (West)
and left
(North)
façades of ca.
1928 garage
(100 Holland
Road) from
Holland Road



Left (North)
and rear (East)
façades of ca.
1928 garage
(100 Holland
Road) from
Holland Road

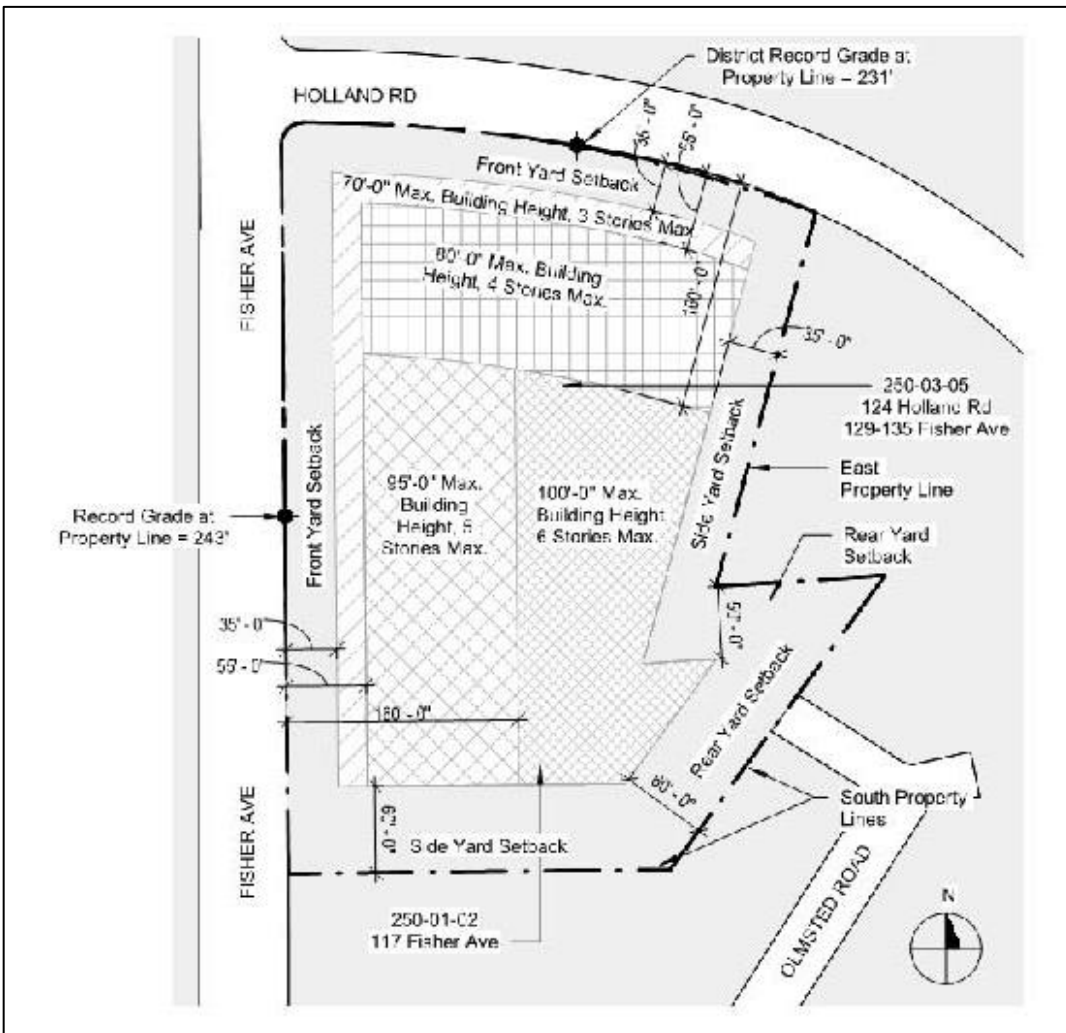
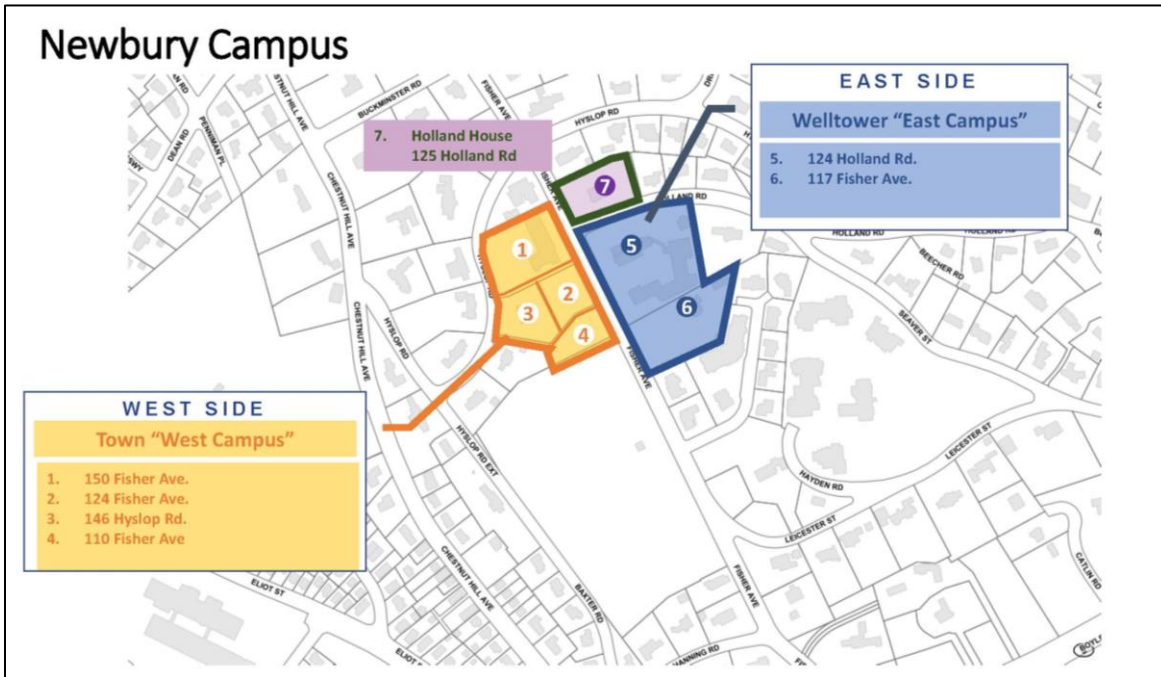


Above - First appearance of 124 Holland Street (Mitton House) on 1900 Bromley Atlas



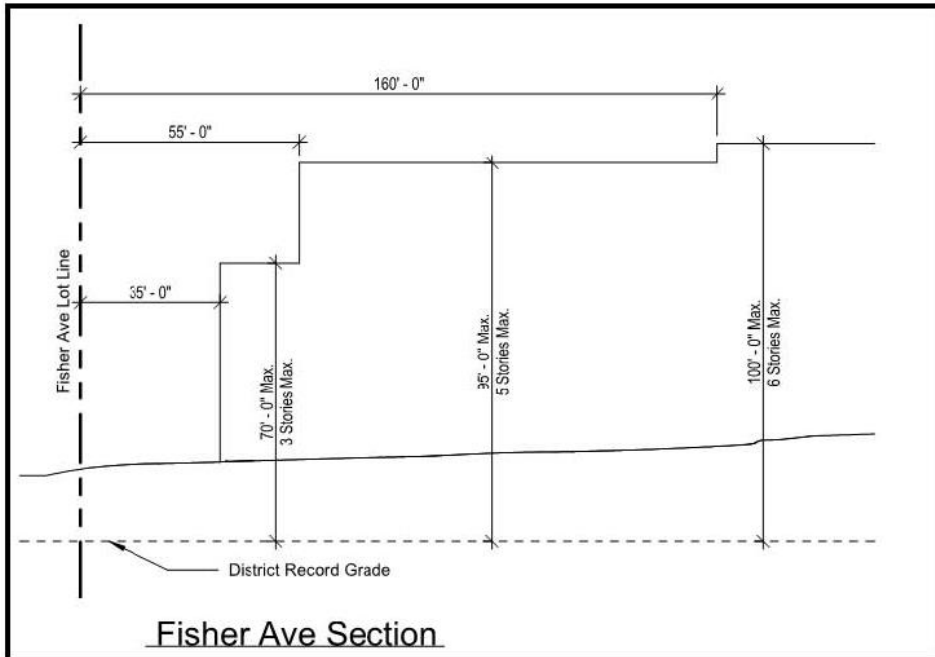
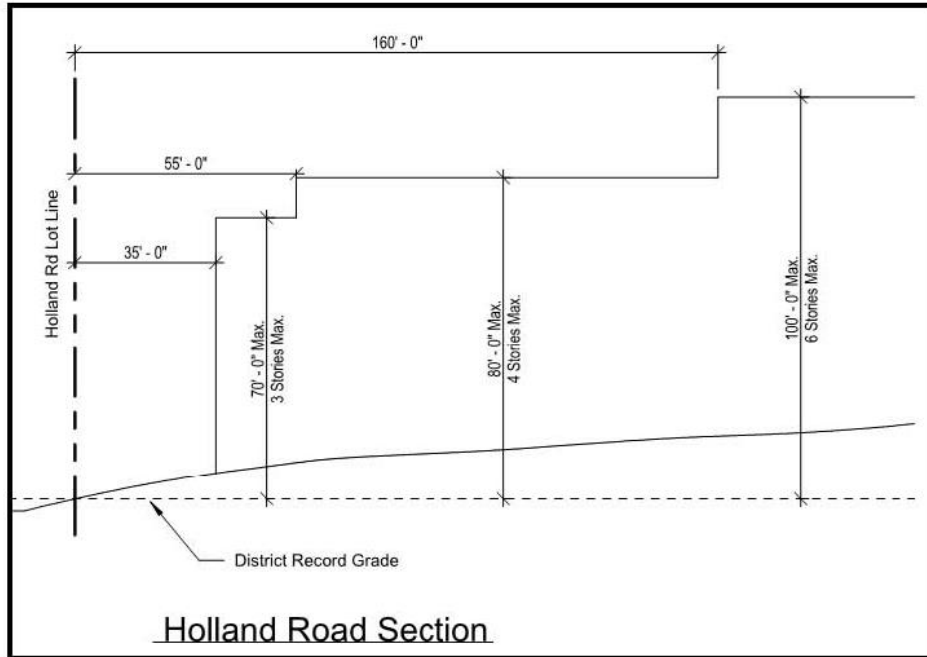
124 Holland/135 Fisher Avenue when the Mittons purchased it in 1927 (Taken from the 1927 Bromley Atlas)

Newbury Campus



Newbury Campus Map, (top) showing all parcels owned by Welltower, Inc. The East Campus (5&6) are the parcels subject to the current request to lift demolition stays.

East Campus (bottom), showing proposed zoning setbacks.



Diagrams explaining the zoning restrictions proposed for the property and the relationship of District Record Grade height to the site.



View from
Northeast